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# U.S. APPROVES GIFT OF CONTRA COPTER

## Private Group Will Send Craft to Nicaragua Rebels for Evacuating Wounded

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 29 — The State Department has given approval for a private anti-Communist organization to send a UH-1B Huey helicopter to help Nicaraguan rebels evacuate injured and sick from the war zones, Reagan Administration officials said today.

Faced with an inability to secure funds from Congress quickly for helicopters and other military equipment, the Administration last week decided to grant a license so that the rebels, known as Contras, will have the use of a large helicopter for the first time, officials said.

The license was issued by the State Department last Friday to the United States Council for World Freedom, headed by the retired Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, which has Federal tax-exempt status, on the basis of a request submitted four days earlier, the officials said. Marta Wintering, a spokesman for the group, which is situated in Phoenix, confirmed that it had received permission and said the helicopter was on its way to Honduras.

The rebels have been seeking helicopters for some time to transport troops and to evacuate casualties. The Central Intelligence Agency had provided them with two small helicopters about two years ago, an Administration official said, but one was recently shot down.

### Funds for Medical Supplies

General Singlaub's organization has been actively soliciting funds for some time for medical supplies and other nonlethal material for the Contras. Last year, after receiving a \$65,000 donation from one benefactor, the group announced plans to purchase the Vietnam-era Huey which was built by Bell Helicopters, for medical evacuation.

The helicopter, named Lady Ellen, after the contributor, Ellen Garwood,

of Austin, Tex., is the most dramatic example of the ability of private American groups to help the Contras, even while Congress continues to delay action on the Administration's latest request for \$100 million in new aid for the rebels, of which \$70 million would be in military support. The Administration plans to supply military helicopters from that aid package, if it is ever approved by Congress.

The Lady Ellen cost about \$100,000. General Singlaub said last summer, and an additional \$35,000 was spent on renovation.

The State Department's Office of Munition Controls had to approve the license because the UH-1B is a military helicopter, even though the stated purpose of the mission is for medical evacuation.

### 'A Need for Air Transportation'

In his organization's application for a license, General Singlaub said, "The helicopter was purchased by the United States Council for World Freedom from funds contributed by individual American citizens for the specific purpose of providing medical support and assistance to the Nicaraguan population now in a refugee status in Honduras."

"The lack of roads and other facilities in the area produces an urgent need for air transportation to move the sick and injured from the border areas to the available hospitals," he said.

"At the present time, people are dying or losing limbs because of a lack of transportation," he said. "It is the intention of this organization to provide this humanitarian assistance to the suffering Nicaraguan freedom fighters and their families in Honduras until such time as the situation is alleviated."

### Licensed Spare Parts

William B. Robinson, director for the office of Munitions Control, told General Singlaub his application was approved for the use of the helicopter in Honduras, provided that his organization retained control of the helicopter, and that it is used "solely for medical evacuation of sick and injured from otherwise inaccessible terrain in the country of sojourn."

General Singlaub was also told that the helicopter could not be armed and that all spare parts had to be licensed as well.

Miss Wintering, the council's spokesman, said the pilots would be provided by the organization. Normally, the Huey has a four-man crew, and can carry about nine soldiers, or evacuees.

In justifying the granting of the license, a State Department official said, "Permitting the export for the purpose of humanitarian assistance by a private group is consistent with United States interests and policy and with the law."

The official stressed the license did not permit the helicopter to be used in Nicaragua, and cannot be armed.

### Single Largest Contributor

A spokesman for the rebels in Washington, Bosco Matamoros, said today, however, he hoped the helicopter would be used in territory seized by the Contras in Nicaragua, since that is where it would be most needed.

Mrs. Garwood, who is in her 80's, has been described by General Singlaub as the single largest contributor to his organization. She said in an interview last year that she gives the money to the rebels to carry on in the spirit of her father, the late William L. Clayton, who was Under Secretary of State in the Truman Administration, and was credited with having inspired the Marshall Plan of aid for Europe.

"I could not let all the work that Dad did to keep the free world free from Communism go under," she said. "And we're about to go under unless we keep those freedom fighters going."